





PRESS RELEASE

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Veterinary Field Units Provide Beneficial Services for Farmers

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN | SEPTEMBER 15, 2011 - Afghan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) representatives met on Tuesday to discuss Afghanistan's nationwide network of USAID-funded veterinary field units. The representatives discussed the accomplishments of these small businesses, examined the challenges they face, and talked about future plans. The project began in November 2006 and is scheduled to be completed at the end of September 2011. The veterinary field units that benefitted from the project are private businesses that provide affordable preventive animal health and treatment services to rural communities. With the training and equipment USAID provided, they will be able to continue to help farmers, using the revenue received for their services, long after the project closes.

The Ministry of Agriculture has developed strong relationships with these veterinary field units and relies on them to report and investigate suspected cases of livestock diseases, assist in preventing outbreaks through vaccinations and improve livestock health through public awareness campaigns.

"The veterinary field units have provided demand-driven animal healthcare services to herders around Afghanistan for years," said Dr. Mirahmad Ahmadzai, the Ministry of Agriculture director general for veterinary services. "These private businesses are a real success story for Afghanistan. They have helped to improve the health of livestock, educate livestock owners and help Afghans get more income from their animals," he addeed.

With an aim to revitalize and improve the global competitiveness of Afghanistan's agriculture sector, USAID has trained the staffs of veterinary field units in veterinary services, business skills, and marketing. USAID has also equipped them with necessary materials, such as furniture, cattle crushes, medicine cabinets, motorbikes, and complete sets of veterinary instruments, including forceps, syringes, sterilizer, scissors, stethoscopes, and thermometers.

USAID has supported 450 veterinary field units across Afghanistan. These units have delivered more than 50.5 million vaccinations and treatments to livestock and have generated nearly \$13 million in sales of veterinary care and supplies since late 2006. USAID Agriculture Development Officer Hervé R. Thomas highlighted USAID's strong partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and commented that this meeting will help the Ministry "provide the support necessary to enhance the activities of these veterinary field units and make them sustainable businesses."

For more information about USAID's programs, please visit: http://afghanistan.usaid.gov

The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for nearly 50 years.







